AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A piezoelectric ~~Piezoelectric~~ ceramic material having a ~~the~~ general composition of ABO_3, the piezoelectric ceramic material comprising:

~~which essentially contains~~ lead zirconate titanate having a ~~and~~ perovskite lattice structure, wherein A stands for A positions in the perovskite lattice structure and B stands for B positions in the ~~crystal~~ perovskite lattice structure, the lead zirconate titanate comprising ~~characterized by a composition that contains~~ at least a proportion of lead zirconate titanate of ~~the general formula~~ $Pb_{1-3x/2-y/2}SE_x\ _{x/2-y/2}Cu^{I}_y(Zr_{0.5515-z}Ti_{0.4485+z})O_{3,}$ wherein:

~~$0.01 < x < 0.04$ and $0 < y < x/2$, wherein~~

a value of x is from about 0.01 to about 0.04;

a value of y is from about 0 to about the value of x divided by two;

SE is a rare-earth metal [[,]] selected from the group consisting of ~~comprising~~ La, Nd, Sm, Gd, Tb, Dy, Ho, Er, Tu, Yb, Lu and Y,

~~wherein the parameter~~ x is determined by ~~the~~ a valence of the rare-earth metal, and

~~wherein the parameter~~ z is selected based on ~~upon the parameter~~ the value of y such that the piezoelectric ceramic material corresponds ~~is tailored~~ to ~~the~~ a morphotropic phase boundary.

2. (Currently Amended) The piezoelectric ceramic ~~Ceramic~~ material of ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein ~~in which~~ Cu is ~~inserted into~~ in the perovskite lattice structure of the piezoelectric ceramic material at least partially in the A positions~~, wherein the Cu that is inserted in A positions is present as a monovalent, positive cation Cu^+~~.

3. (Currently Amended) The piezoelectric ceramic ~~Ceramic~~ material of ~~according to~~ claim 1, wherein the piezoelectric ceramic material comprises ~~or 2 with the composition~~ $Pb_{0.96}Nd_{0.02}Cu_{0.02}(Zr_{0.5515}Ti_{0.4485})O_3$.

4. (Currently Amended) A method ~~Method~~ for producing a ceramic material according to claim ~~one of claims~~ 1 ~~through 3~~, the method comprising:

preparing ~~in which~~ a ~~ceramic raw~~ materials mixture ~~containing~~ that includes copper oxide (CuO) ~~is prepared~~,

performing a calcination of ~~in which~~ the ~~ceramic raw~~ materials mixture ~~is calcined~~ under inert conditions~~, with the calcination being performed~~ in a reduced atmosphere under an oxygen partial pressure[[,]] at which Cu and ~~copper oxide~~ CuO are in equilibrium and coexist to form a calcined ceramic product,

grinding ~~in which~~ the calcined ceramic product; ~~is finely ground,~~

homogenizing the calcined ceramic product ~~homogenized~~; and

sintering the calcined ceramic product. ~~then sintered.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The method of ~~Method according to~~ claim 4, wherein performing the calcination of the ceramic raw materials mixture comprises performing the calcination ~~in which the calcination is performed~~ in a moist nitrogen atmosphere.

6. (Currently Amended) A method ~~Method~~ for producing a ceramic material according to claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 through 3,~~ the method comprising:

performing a calcination of ~~in which~~ a ~~ceramic raw~~ materials mixture without a copper oxide (CuO) additive ~~is calcined, wherein during the calcination~~ to form a piezoceramic perovskite mixed-crystal phase material; ~~is formed;~~

adding ~~in which~~ copper oxide Cu_2O ~~is added~~ to a slurry, wherein the copper oxide is about evenly distributed throughout the slurry;

grinding the piezoceramic perovskite mixed-crystal phase material to form a ground material; ~~in which the product of the calcination is finely ground and~~

mixing the ground material ~~mixed~~ with the slurry to form ~~, forming~~ a ceramic mass; and

sintering ~~in which~~ the ceramic mass ~~is sintered~~ under inert conditions.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein sintering the ceramic mass comprises sintering the ceramic mass ~~Method pursuant to one of claims 4 through 6, in which the sintering is performed~~ in a moist nitrogen atmosphere.

8. (Currently Amended) A multilayer ~~Multilayer~~ piezoelectric component comprising:

a plurality of ~~with~~ ceramic layers comprising ~~made from a~~ the ceramic material ~~according to one of claims 1 through 3~~ of claim 1; and

a plurality of internal electrode layers, wherein the ceramic layers and the electrode layers alternate. ~~are arranged one on top of another in alternating series wherein the internal electrodes contain at least a proportion of the metallic copper.~~

9. (New) The piezoelectric ceramic material of claim 2, wherein the Cu inserted in A positions is a monovalent, positive cation Cu+.

10. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein sintering the calcined ceramic product comprises sintering the calcined ceramic product in a moist nitrogen atmosphere.

11. (New) The multilayer piezoelectric component of claim 1, wherein the internal electrode layers include at least a proportion of metallic copper.

12. (New) The multilayer piezoelectric component of claim 1, wherein a value of z is from about -0.15 to about +0.15.

13. (New) The multilayer piezoelectric component of claim 1, wherein a value of z is from about -0.016 to about +0.0205.

14. (New) The multilayer piezoelectric component of claim 1, wherein □ is a vacancy in a crystal lattice of the lead zirconate titanate.